

West Virginia

Agricultural Statistics

Service

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2003 FARM NUMBERS AND TOTAL LAND IN FARMS

WEST VIRGINIA -- The number of farms in West Virginia totaled 20,800 in 2003, same as 2002 and 2001. The total land in farms was 3.6 million acres, also the same as 2002 and 2001. The average farm size was 173 acres, same as 2002 and 2001. The 2002 and 2001 numbers were revised based on the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

The West Virginia number of farms in the \$1,000 - \$9,999 economic sales class totaled 17,200. Land in farms for this sales class totaled 2.1 million acres. These were also unchanged from 2002 and 2001.

UNITED STATES -- The number of farms in the United States in 2003 is estimated at 2.13 million, 0.4 percent fewer than in 2002. The decline in farms occurred in all sales categories except the \$250,000-\$499,999 class which remained unchanged. Total land in farms, at 938.8 million acres, decreased 1,550,000 acres from 2002. The average size farm during 2003 was 441 acres, an increase of one acre from the previous year. The decline in the number of farms and land in farms continues to reflect consolidation in farming operations and competition for agricultural land for other uses.

The U.S. number of agricultural operations in the economic sales class \$1,000-\$9,999 declined 0.2 percent to 1,199,270 in 2003. Farms with sales of \$10,000-\$99,999 decreased 0.7% from 2002 to 600,530. The number of farms with \$100,000-\$249,999 in sales was 167,230, a decline of 0.9 percent. In the \$250,000-\$499,999 sales class, the number of farms was unchanged from the previous year. The number of agricultural operations with \$500,000 or more of sales declined 0.4% from 2002. Generally favorable weather, stronger commodity prices, higher value of commodities produced, farm consolidation, and competition for other uses of farmland contributed to the shifting of farms among the sales categories.

The number of farms in the North Central Region decreased by 5,300 (0.7 percent) and the number of farms in the West Region declined by 1,800 (0.6 percent). The South Region lost 1,300 farms (0.1 percent). The number of farms declined 100 (0.1 percent) in the Northeast Region.

The number of farms in 2003 declined in 20 States, remained unchanged in 28 States, and increased in two States. The largest decline in farms occurred in California which lost 1,200 places followed by Missouri with 1,000. Other notable declines were: Minnesota and Nebraska, 900; Indiana, 800; North Carolina, 700; Iowa, 600; and Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin each losing 500 farms. For the two states with increased farm numbers, Mississippi added 600 and Montana 100 places.

Texas, with 130.5 million acres of farm and ranch land, leads the nation. The farm and ranch acreage for Texas in 2003 was unchanged from 2002. States with the largest decreases in land in farms were: California, down 500,000 acres; Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Wisconsin each lost 100,000 acres. Other states showing declines in agricultural acreage were: Virginia, 70,000 acres; Indiana and Wyoming, 60,000 acres; Louisiana and Washington, 50,000 acres; Maryland, 20,000 acres; and Delaware, New York, Ohio, and Vermont each with 10,000 fewer acres. After several years of drought conditions, renewed public grazing allotments contributed to an increase of 300,000 acres in Montana's ranch land.